



SENATE JUDICIARY
Exhibit No. 34
Date: 3/26/15
Bill No. HB44

Dear Chairman Sales and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

The ACLU of Montana opposes HB 477 by Rep. Bennett regarding physician aid in dying.

There are two provisions of our state constitution that the ACLU works to preserve that uniquely reflect the specialness of our constitution and of our people -- two provisions that most other state constitutions do not have explicitly -- two provisions that particularly reflect our uniquely Montana values. The first is the right to individual dignity and the second is an explicit right to privacy. Together these rights stand to protect Montanans' ability to live their own lives, determine their own fates, and live free from undue interference from government officials.

This bill takes that ability away. Threatening doctors and caregivers with criminal charges effectively wrests control over a patient's death away from the individual patient and places it in the hands of a government official. A doctor's office is a place for the patient and his or her medical provider. A dying patient's bedside is a place for the patient and his or her loved ones. Neither is a good place for a government official to be.

We respectfully urge you not to concur on this bill.

Sincerely,

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